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Strategy Turned Upside Down:

The Bottom-Up Review & the Making of U.S. Defense Policy

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by

**LTC Timothy D. Ringgold
U.S. Army War College Fellow
Center for Strategic & International Studies**

March 21, 1996

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Executive Summary

Two and one-half years ago, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell released the new administration's strategic analysis of United States security needs for the post-Cold War era. The Bottom-Up Review: Forces for a New Era, which quickly became known simply as the BUR, established the framework from which the national security strategy was developed and fixed the design, composition and purpose of military forces the U.S. will maintain for the balance of the decade and, possibly, well into the future. In short, the BUR's influence is far reaching. But in spite of its significant influence, the Bottom-Up Review has been widely criticized outside the administration.

The Bottom-Up Review's mandate was to conduct a "comprehensive review of the nation's defense strategy, force structure, modernization, infrastructure, and foundations." Sadly, these high goals were not achieved. The steering committee correctly described the post-Cold War environment that the U.S. faces, but proceeded to propose a military force ill-designed to confront the four dangers identified: proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; democratic reform in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union; dangers to the U.S. economy; and, the threat of regional aggressors. Only the threat posed by regional aggression is confronted by the BUR force.

Since the BUR's release, the senior Defense officials responsible for the report have all left the Defense Department. Yet, the Clinton Administration has steadfastly rejected any notion of updating or revising the BUR's strategy , force mix and design, or projected costs. As recently as September 21, 1995, at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee for a second term as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John M. Shalikashvili emphasized that no replacement for the BUR is warranted or desired by the services.

The purpose of this paper is four-fold. First, it reviews the rationale behind the Bottom-Up Review and examine the analytical framework the steering committee used to reach its force structure and strategy recommendations to establish the correlation between the analysis and policy recommendations. Next, we review the politics behind the process and specifically considers whether, and to what extent, domestic politics intervened to limit the potential and applicability of the BUR recommendations, and why, in spite of its obvious and widely reported short-comings, the BUR survives as the framework for the national security strategy. Using Graham Allison's bureaucratic politics model, I argue that domestic political constraints on the new administration precluded a realistic appraisal of our security needs and dictated the BUR results before the steering group held its first meeting. And in spite of the passage of time and the departure of senior BUR planners, those same domestic political constraints still restrict administration options, forcing adherence to a flawed strategy and the maintenance of an ill-designed force.

The third purpose of this paper is to examine several of the BUR assumptions and the implications of its recommendations for future defense organization. BUR critics, including both the General Accounting Office and the Congressional Budget Office report the BUR force is significantly underfunded and that without substantial increases in budget authority, readiness will suffer. To maintain readiness without reducing the force, Defense officials are delaying modernization programs which will inevitably reduce the force's competitive technological advantage. The BUR strategy of fighting two conflicts simultaneously requires a force that is too large to modernize and to keep ready at the same time, within projected funding levels. The validity of this requirement is examined along with its impact on force design and budget requirements.

Finally, this paper proposes other considerations for achieving U.S. national security objectives not addressed adequately by the BUR and recommends possible solutions to the BUR funding shortfall.

I. Introduction.

On September 1, 1993, seven months into the Clinton Administration, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell released the new administration's strategic analysis of United States security needs for the post-Cold War era. The Bottom-Up Review: Forces for a New Era,¹ which quickly became known simply as the BUR, established the framework from which the national security strategy was developed and fixed the design, composition and purpose of military forces the U.S. will maintain for the balance of the decade and, possibly, well into the future. In short, the BUR's influence is far reaching. But in spite of its significant influence, the Bottom-Up Review has been widely criticized outside the administration.

John Hopkins University professor Eliot A. Cohen called the BUR "remarkably conservative and intellectually timid."² Reagan administration Assistant Defense Secretary Lawrence Korb, now at The Brookings Institution, labeled the BUR force structure "Bush-lite" because of its similarity to former President Bush's Base Force, only marginally smaller. Robert L. Borosage, a senior fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, found the BUR lacked a new strategic concept and offered little more than the earlier Bush plan "stuffed into the Clinton budget constraints."³ The Defense Budget Project's Andrew F. Krepinevich argued that the BUR force is "primarily organized to wage the last war more effectively, rather than prepared for the greatest or most likely challenges to U.S. security."⁴ A report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies found that the BUR force "broken conceptually and fiscally."⁵

BUR critics are not restricted to universities and think tanks. A General Accounting Office analysis found the BUR force underfunded by as much as \$150 billion through the end of the decade.⁶ The Congressional Budget Office estimated the defense procurement account, which funds modernization, to be underfunded as much as \$200 billion over the next fifteen years.⁷ The Pentagon itself acknowledged that the

¹ The Bottom-Up Review steering group produced two documents. The first, Les Aspin, The Bottom-Up Review: Forces for a New Era (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, September 1993), was the seventeen page monograph released at the Department of Defense press conference on September 1, 1993. The following month an expanded version, Les Aspin, Report on the Bottom-Up Review, (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, October 1993), a 109 page report, was made public.

² Eliot A. Cohen, "Down The Hatch," in *The New Republic*, (March 7, 1994), 14.

³ Robert L. Borosage, "Inventing the Threat, Clinton's Defense Budget" in *The World Policy Journal*, (Winter 1993).

⁴ Andrew F. Krepinevich, The Bottom-Up Review: An Assessment, (Washington, DC: Defense Budget Project, February 1994), 61.

⁵ Don M. Snider, Daniel Goure and Stephen A. Cambone, Defense in the Late 1990s, Avoiding the Train Wreck, (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 1995), 4.

⁶ General Accounting Office, Future Years Defense Program, Optimistic Estimates Lead to Billions in Overprogramming, (Washington, DC: General Accounting Office, July 1994).

⁷ Congressional Budget Office, "Planning for Defense: Affordability and Capability of the Administration Program," CBO Memorandum, March 1994.

BUR program was underfunded, predictably by a lesser amount. At the press conference announcing the BUR recommendations, Secretary Aspin acknowledged a \$13 billion funding shortfall. Four months later Aspin's replacement as Secretary of Defense, William J. Perry, put the funding shortfall in the \$20 billion range.⁸ Under Secretary of Defense and BUR steering group chairman John Deutch later raised the shortfall estimate to \$40 billion.⁹ Each of these shortfall estimates assume the administration's future year defense budgets will be fully funded, which is highly questionable in view of the ongoing battle between the administration and Congress over balancing the federal budget in seven years. The actual underfunding will be the current shortfall projections combined with any additional cuts imposed to achieve budget balance.

In the two years since the BUR's release, the senior Defense officials responsible for the report have all left the Defense Department. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin resigned three months later and subsequently died. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Colin Powell retired at the end of the month, wrote his autobiography, and declined to become a candidate in the 1996 Presidential election. BUR steering group chairman, Under Secretary of Defense John Deutch left to head the Central Intelligence Agency. Yet, the Clinton Administration has steadfastly rejected any notion of updating or revising the BUR's strategy , force mix and design, or projected costs. As recently as September 21, 1995, at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee for a second term as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John M. Shalikashvili emphasized that no replacement for the BUR is warranted or desired by the services.¹⁰

The purpose of this paper is four-fold. First, I will review the rationale behind the Bottom-Up Review and examine the analytical framework the steering committee used to reach its force structure and strategy recommendations. This review includes a comparison of the recommendations with the process parameters to determine if another steering group composed of different policy actors would reach the same findings and recommendations. In other words, I will look at the analytical framework that the BUR steering group reportedly employed and determine if the analysis consistently leads to the same conclusions and recommendations. This examination is relevant precisely because of the extensive criticism directed at the BUR. Is this criticism warranted and if so, was it caused by faulty analysis? Or, can other factors explain the criticism?

⁸ Testimony of Secretary of Defense-nominee William J. Perry before the Senate Armed Services Committee, February 2, 1994, in Nominations Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Second Session, 103d Congress, S. Hrg. 103-873, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994), 18.

⁹ Deputy Secretary of Defense John Deutch testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee September 20, 1994.

¹⁰ Testimony of GEN John Shalikashvili before the Senate Armed Services Committee, September 21, 1995. Retrieved from Legi-Slate, Transcript ID: 1232592.

Having established the correlation between the analysis and policy recommendations, next I will review the politics behind the process. Specifically, I will consider whether, and to what extent, domestic politics intervened to limit the potential and applicability of the BUR recommendations, and why, in spite of its obvious and widely reported short-comings, the BUR survives as the framework for the national security strategy. I will use Graham Allison's bureaucratic politics model to argue that domestic political constraints on the new administration precluded a realistic appraisal of our security needs and dictated the BUR results before the steering group held its first meeting. And in spite of the passage of time and the departure of senior BUR planners, those same domestic political constraints still restrict administration options, forcing adherence to a flawed strategy and the maintenance of an ill-designed force.

The third purpose of this paper is to examine several of the BUR assumptions and the implications of its recommendations for future defense organization. BUR critics, including both the General Accounting Office and the Congressional Budget Office report the BUR force is significantly underfunded and that without substantial increases in budget authority, readiness will suffer.¹¹ To maintain readiness without reducing the force, Defense officials are delaying modernization programs which will inevitably reduce the force's competitive technological advantage.¹² Over the past ten years, force size has been reduced by one-third while budget authority for military procurement has dropped from \$132.8 billion (1995 dollars) for fiscal year 1985 to about \$43.3 billion for 1995, a cut of more than 67 percent.¹³ The BUR strategy of fighting two conflicts simultaneously requires a force that is too large to modernize and to keep ready at the same time, within projected funding levels. The validity of this requirement is examined along with its impact on force design and budget requirements.

The fourth purpose of this paper is to propose other considerations for achieving U.S. national security objectives not addressed adequately by the BUR and to recommend possible solutions to the BUR funding shortfall. In making such recommendations, it is necessary to break with conventional force planning. Inevitably, a number of military and political cherished oxes will be gored. Short of passively adopting the status quo, there is no way to avoid this. We should not forget that defense budgets, as do all federal budgets, reflect our national priorities and are arrived at through the political process. But national security is different. It is the first priority of government and first claimant on the nation's resources. No one would argue that the allocation process is perfect or that it produces optimal solutions. Nor should one conclude the system is broken beyond repair. The adage about how laws

¹¹ GAO, *ibid.*, and CBO, *ibid.*

¹² David A. Fulghum and John D. Morrocco, "Deutch Demands Cuts, Services Scramble Anew," *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, August 29, 1994, 22. See also William W. Kaufmann, "Hollow Forces," *The Brookings Review* Fall 1994.

¹³ Kaufmann, *ibid.*, 26. See also Department of Defense, Office of the Comptroller, "National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 1995, (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, March 1994), table 6-8, 85.

and sausage are made applies no less to defense budgets and the over-arching national military and national security strategies.

Throughout this review, the political process, with all its flaws, is taken as a given and no criticism of the process participants is intended. It is assumed that they merely adapt the system as they find it to their particular role and agenda. I for one would do no less.

II. The Need for a Review and Update of U.S. Military Forces and Strategy.

"As we restructure American military forces to meet the new threats of the post-Cold War world, we can responsibly reduce our defense budget. But lest no one be in any doubt: The men and women who serve under the American flag will be the best trained, best equipped, best prepared fighting force in the world, so long as I am President."¹⁴

President William J. Clinton (1993)

U.S. military force design and the national security strategy are shaped by the interaction of a number of influences, most of which defy precise identification. These influences can be classified into three general categories: international political and military developments, domestic priorities, and technological advancements.¹⁵ By the time of the 1992 presidential election, events in each of these categories, but especially in the first two, contributed to the notion that a complete rethinking of the strategy, design, and role for the U.S. military was needed for the post-Cold War era.

With the tearing down of the Berlin Wall in 1989, German reunification and Soviet Union disintegration, the Cold War ended at about the time the 1992 presidential election campaign began. The euphoria of victory in the Persian Gulf quickly faded under the clouds of a lingering domestic economic recession. America once again wanted to turn inward, to largely ignore world events and to focus on problems at home. As America struggled economically, many saw the end of the Cold War as an opportunity to harvest a "peace dividend" by substantially reducing the Cold War defense structure and applying the savings to more pressing domestic priorities.

President Bush started the post-Cold War military restructuring and defense budget downsizing in a major policy address delivered August 2, 1990 - ironically the same day that Saddam Hussein seized Kuwait.¹⁶ Implementation of the Bush plan had to wait for more than a year as America fought its first post-Cold War conflict, conducted its largest deployment since the end of the Vietnam War and largest mobilization of reserve forces since Korea.

The Bush plan, known as the "Base Force," called for a reduction of approximately twenty-five percent of military forces and defense budgets through the end of the decade. Table 1 below compares the 1990 Cold War force and the proposed Base Force. The Base Force recommendations pleased no one. The

¹⁴ President Bill Clinton, "State of the Union 1993," delivered to the Joint Session of Congress, Washington, DC, February 17, 1993.

¹⁵ Amos A. Jordan, William J. Taylor, Jr. and Lawrence J. Korb, American National Security, Policy and Process, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 63.

¹⁶ Speech delivered by President George Bush, "United States Defenses, Reshaping Our Forces," at the Aspen Institute, Aspen, Colorado, August 2, 1990.

military felt betrayed that the reward for Cold War victory was a rapid restructuring and a thankless transition to irrelevance. Liberals eager to siphon off large budget authority for favored domestic initiatives argued that the cuts didn't go far enough. Conservatives, the most faithful backers of large defense budgets during the Cold War, saw the Base Force as dismantling the military which would diminish America's leadership in the world.¹⁷

Cold War to Bush Base Force Force Structure Changes

	Cold War base 1990	Bush Base Force	Reduction
Land Force:			
Army Active Divisions	18	12	33.3%
Army National Guard Divisions	10	8	20.0%
Marine Corps (3 active/1 reserve)	4	4	0.0%
Navy:			
Ship Battle Forces	546	430	21.2%
Aircraft Carriers			
Active	15	13	13.3%
Reserve	1	0	100.0%
Navy Carrier Wings			
Active	13	11	15.4%
Reserve	2	2	0.0%
Air Force:			
Active Fighter Wings	24	15.3	36.3%
Reserve Fighter Wings	12	11.3	5.8%

Source: Department of Defense Appropriations, Fiscal Year 1995, S. Hrg. 103-834, Pt. 1, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994), 4.

Table 1

One of the harshest Base Force critics was House Armed Services Committee Chairman Les Aspin (D-WI). Aspin, a defense intellectual, saw the Base Force as little more than an across-the-board reduction of the existing force, not a thorough rethinking of defense needs for a new era.¹⁸ Presidential candidate Bill Clinton agreed. In a speech to his alma mater, Georgetown University, in the months after the U.S. victory in the Gulf, Clinton rejected the Bush Base Force and pledged to "restructure our military forces for a new era."¹⁹

The 1992 Presidential election turned on domestic politics. In the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, President George Bush achieved the highest public opinion approval ratings of any President since pollsters began to calculate approval ratings

¹⁷ Jim Wolfe, "Powell Outlines Plan for Small, Versatile Force of the Future," *Air Force Times*, April 15, 1991, 3.

¹⁸ Eliot A. Cohen, "Beyond 'Bottom Up,'" *National Review*, November 15, 1993, 40.

¹⁹ Speech delivered by Governor Bill Clinton, "A New Covenant for American Security," at Georgetown University on December 12, 1991, unpublished.

sixty odd years ago. An incredible ninety-one percent of the American people approved of the way he was performing his duties.²⁰ Twenty months later they voted him from office as challenger Bill Clinton delivered a message of domestic focus and economic regeneration. A sign on the wall opposite Clinton's desk in his Little Rock, Arkansas campaign office summed up the campaign's theme: "The Economy, Stupid."²¹

Shortly after the inauguration, Clinton's new Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, established the Bottom-Up Review steering committee to conduct a "comprehensive review of the nation's defense strategy, force structure, modernization, infrastructure, and foundations."²² Under Secretary of Defense John Deutch chaired the group with representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the unified and specified commands, each of the uniform military services, and other defense agencies.²³ Six months later, the findings of the review were released in a nationally televised press conference.

²⁰ A *USA Today* survey reported Bush's job approval rating at 91 percent. A *Washington Post/ABC News* poll conducted at the same time reported 90 percent approval, while a *New York Times/CBS News* poll put Bush's job approval rating at 87 percent. Previously, the highest recorded job approval rating was President Truman at the time of Germany's surrender in World War II. See Jack W. Germond and Jules Witcover, Mad as Hell, Revolt at the Ballot Box 1992, (New York, NY: Warner Books, Inc., 1993), 50.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 432.

²² Aspin, Report on the Bottom-Up Review, *ibid.*, iii.

²³ *Ibid.*, 4.

III. The Bottom-Up Review Methodology.

The Report on the Bottom-Up Review details the forces, programs and defense budgets in a multi-year plan and shifts the focus of U.S. national security away from containment of the Soviet Union toward the new dangers of the post-Cold War era. To reach its recommendations, the BUR employed a six step methodology, as shown in Figure 1.

BUR Methodology

1. Assess the Post-Cold War Era
2. Devise U.S. Defense Strategy
3. Construct Force Building Blocks
4. Combine Force Building Blocks
5. Select: Force Structure Modernization Defense Foundations Policy Initiatives
6. Build Multi-year Defense Plan

Source: Les Aspin, Report on the Bottom-Up Review, (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, October 1993), 4.

Figure 1

In step one, the steering group analyzed changes in the post-Cold War international and military environment and identified the new dangers the U.S. will face. These new dangers fall into four broad categories: dangers posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as the dangers associated with the large arsenal that remains in the former Soviet Union; dangers to democracy and reform in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union; economic dangers to the U.S. economy; and, regional dangers posed by the threat of large-scale aggression by regional powers.²⁴

Having described the dangers the U.S. faces in the post-Cold War era, several strategies were considered. Guiding this discussion was the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommendation during the Bush Administration that the minimum capability that the U.S. should maintain would be the ability to fight two geographically dispersed conflicts that occur close in time.²⁵ The two policy choices given final consideration called for a military strategy of either "win-win" or "win-hold-win." Under a "win-hold-win" military strategy, the U.S. would shape its force for the most demanding potential conflict and maintain the ability to decisively engage and defeat an aggressor while conducting an

²⁴ Ibid., 2.

²⁵ Krepinevich, *ibid.*, 21.

economy of force operation in a subsequent theater, should the need arise.²⁶ For example, should a conflict breakout in Korea after U.S. forces were committed to the Persian Gulf, the U.S. would deploy air and naval forces to the Korean theater of operations to stabilize the conflict. After decisively defeating the aggression in the first operation, forces would be disengaged and redeployed to the second conflict to reinforce ongoing U.S. and allied operations. This "win-hold-win" strategy is reminiscent of the U.S. strategy during World War II in which priority was given to the defeat of Germany.²⁷ Critics argued that "win-hold-win" was too risky and might actually encourage aggression in the second region once U.S. troops were committed to the first operation.²⁸ The BUR committee adopted instead a strategy of "win-win" in which the U.S. would maintain sufficient forces to fight two conflicts that occur nearly simultaneously. Little analysis was provided to support of this choice other than the JCS Chairman's view that such a capability was the minimum required in order to be considered a great power.²⁹

The BUR gives two reasons for adopting a "win-win" strategy. First, if U.S. forces were committed to one MRC, another hostile power could take advantage of U.S. involvement and attack its neighbor, "especially if it were convinced the United States and its allies did not possess the requisite military capability or will to oppose it." Second, maintaining the capability to engage two conflicts would provide "a hedge against the possibility that a future adversary might one day confront us with a larger-than-expected threat."³⁰ Surprisingly however, the BUR concluded that the U.S. must retain sufficient forces to not only fight and win both conflicts simultaneously, but maintain the ability to fight them both unilaterally, if necessary.³¹

The analytical tool used by BUR planners to calculate total force requirements in steps three and four of their methodology was a combination of scenarios and building blocks. Using the scenario method, the analyst determines the missions the forces are expected to perform and their probability of occurrence. Using the building block method, the analyst designs a force to accomplish the mission described by the scenario. By fitting various scenarios together based upon their probability of both

²⁶ In 1992, as chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Les Aspin argued for the "win-hold-win" strategy. As Secretary of Defense, he initially supported this approach but backed away because of a combination of pressures, including the political capital expended over the gays in the military issue. During Senate budget hearings two months after Aspin's departure, his successor, William Perry seemed to adopt the "win-hold-win" strategy. Perry testified, "I think it is entirely implausible that we would ever fight two wars at once." See David Callahan, "Saving Defense Dollars," *Foreign Policy*, Fall 1994, 107-8.

²⁷ Samuel Eliot Morison, Strategy and Compromise (Boston, MA: Atlantic-Little Brown, Inc., 1958), 63-70. Kent Roberts Greenfield, American Strategy in World War II (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1963), 5.

²⁸ Another complicating factor is that real countries sometimes object to theoretical scenarios that they see applying to themselves. During the strategy debate, South Korea objected to the "win-hold-win" strategy because they saw they "hold" applying to them. See John Thomas Tyler, Jr., "Reality Check - The Trouble With Scenario-Based Military Planning," *The Brookings Review*, Fall 1994, 32.

²⁹ DoD press conference, September 1, 1993.

³⁰ Ibid., 7.

³¹ Ibid., 15.

individual and simultaneous occurrence, the analyst builds a total force that eliminates, to the acceptable degree of risk, extraneous forces. For example, a force structure building block may contain units necessary to conduct water crossing operations. Such units are normally equipped with assault bridging and other floatation equipment. A scenario based in Europe with its frequent rivers and streams would require a number of units with this capability. A desert based scenario such as a Persian Gulf state would not. If the analyst determines the most demanding combination of requirements to be one European and one Persian Gulf conflict occurring simultaneously, only one set of capabilities to conduct water crossing operations need be maintained. In this manner needless duplication can be eliminated from the force and resources diverted to higher priority requirements.

Four broad categories of potential operations were evaluated to determine the design of the BUR force. These were: major regional conflicts; smaller-scale conflicts such as peace enforcement; overseas presence of U.S. forces to conduct normal peacetime operations; and, deterrence of attacks using weapons of mass destruction against either U.S. territory or forces, or the territory and forces of our allies. The BUR recognized that the actual list of U.S. operations includes other missions such as humanitarian assistance and counterdrug operations but concluded that projected forces are capable of accomplishing these missions in addition to any warfighting requirement and that dedicated forces need not be provided.³²

To construct the force building block the BUR used several scenarios depicting possible future conflicts with potential Third World powers. Both scenarios assumed a similar enemy operation: an armor-heavy, combined-arms offensive against the outnumbered forces of a neighboring state. To respond to this aggression, U.S. forces had to deploy to the region, supplement local forces, halt the aggression, and defeat the enemy force. Both scenarios assumed that U.S. forces would fight as part of a U.S. led coalition.³³ Using Operation Desert Storm as the model, the BUR estimated the minimum forces required for each regional conflict as: 4 to 5 Army divisions; 4 to 5 Marine Brigades; 10 Air Force fighter wings; up to 100 Air Force heavy bombers armed with conventional munitions; 4 to 5 Navy aircraft carrier battle groups; and, unspecified numbers of special operations forces. To arrive at the BUR total force, planners doubled the force package for one MRC, and added a margin of safety based on "military judgment" to arrive at the force size shown in Table 2.³⁴

BUR critics argue that the Desert Storm model is inappropriate for force planning and skews the results to too large a force. During Desert Storm planners could draw on the entire U.S. force despite the existing two war strategy, resulting in the use of far more force than necessary. To justify a force of the size used in Desert Storm as the model for future conflicts, planners must first demonstrate that the Desert Storm results

³² Ibid., 13.

³³ Ibid., 15.

³⁴ Ibid., 19.

could not have been produced with fewer ground, air and naval forces.³⁵ Further, the BUR does not assume allies or coalitions in its force design, but requires the capability for the U.S. to act unilaterally. Short of a highly unlikely direct attack of U.S. territory, it is inconceivable that the U.S. would fight a major conflict unilaterally. In the Persian Gulf War, the U.S. had thirty-seven coalition partners that provided more than a quarter million troops.³⁶ Recent operations in which the U.S. did act unilaterally, such as Grenada (1983) and Panama (1989), do not qualify as major conflicts.

Bottom-Up Review Force (1999)

Army	10 Active Division 8 Army National Guard Divisions* 18 Army National Guard Brigades**
Navy	11 Active Aircraft Carriers 1 Reserve Aircraft Carrier 45-55 Attack Submarines 346 Ships
Air Force	13 Active Fighter Wings 7 Reserve Fighter Wings Up to 184 B-52H, B-1 and B-2 Bombers
Marine Corps	3 Marine Expeditionary Forces 174,000 Active Duty Personnel 42,000 Reserve Duty Personnel
Strategic Nuclear Forces (by 2003)	18 Ballistic Missile Submarines Up to 94 B-52H Bombers 20 B-2 Bombers 500 Minuteman III Single Warhead ICBMs

*not explicitly identified in the BUR but subsequently confirmed by Secretary of Defense Perry, Department of Defense Press Release, "RC Off-Site Agreement," December 10, 1993.

**includes 15 Enhanced Readiness Brigades

Source: Les Aspin, Report on the Bottom-Up Review, October 1993, Figure 7, p. 28.

Table 2

By choosing to maintain the capacity to act alone, the U.S. encourages other nations to shirk their responsibility for collective security and goads our potential adversaries into building up their militaries.³⁷ Neither of these results enhance U.S. national security. Worse yet, assuming no increase in resources available for defense, maintaining a force larger than necessary reduces funds available for modernization,

³⁵ William W. Kaufmann and John D. Steinbruner, Decisions For Defense, Prospects for a New Order, (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1991), 45.

³⁶ Trevor N. Dupuy, ed., International Military and Defense Encyclopedia, (Washington, DC: Brassey's (U.S.), Inc., 1993), 1112.

³⁷ Krepenivich, *ibid.*, 15 and Borosage, *ibid.*, 11.

training, infrastructure, war reserve stockpiles, and for new policy initiatives such as the Army's prepositioned forces afloat. Underfunding each of these areas reduces the readiness and capability of the force.³⁸

The resulting policy options were to either: (1) downsize the total force; (2) accept the degradation of readiness and the gradual antiquation of the force; or (3) to increase the defense budget. In building its multi-year defense plan, the Clinton Administration, as did its predecessor, choose option two as shown in table 3 below. However, these absolute numbers mask the impact on individual service budgets. For example, when the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, the Army allocated 24 percent of its budget to research, development and procurement programs. Last year, it was down to 15 percent. This year, the Army will spend only 13 percent of its budget on modernization.³⁹ These trends clearly indicate that the technological lead that U.S. forces demonstrated in the Persian Gulf War is in danger of being lost.

DoD Procurement Budget Authority (Constant FY 95 \$)

Fiscal Year	In Billions:
1985	\$132.7
1986	122.8
1987	102.8
1988	98.8
1989	94.5
1990	93.7
1991	80.2
1992	68.5
1993	55.9
1994	45.8
1995	43.3
1996	43.1

Source: Department of Defense Appropriations Bill, 1995, House Report 103-562, p.9 and the Conference Report on the 1996 Defense Bill, House Report 104-344.

Table 3

To put the decrease in modernization efforts in perspective, it is useful to compare the percentage decline in procurement budget authority with declines in military personnel strength levels over the same period. A ten percent decline in procurement accompanied by a ten percent decline in personnel strength results in a smaller, but equally modernized force. A large decrease in procurement accompanied

³⁸ Eliot A. Cohen, "What to do About National Defense," *Commentary*, November 1994, 24-25.

³⁹ Army Budget Office, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management & Comptroller, The Army Budget: 1996/1997 President's Budget, (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, April 1995), 5.

The Modernization Gap Procurement vs. Personnel Reductions

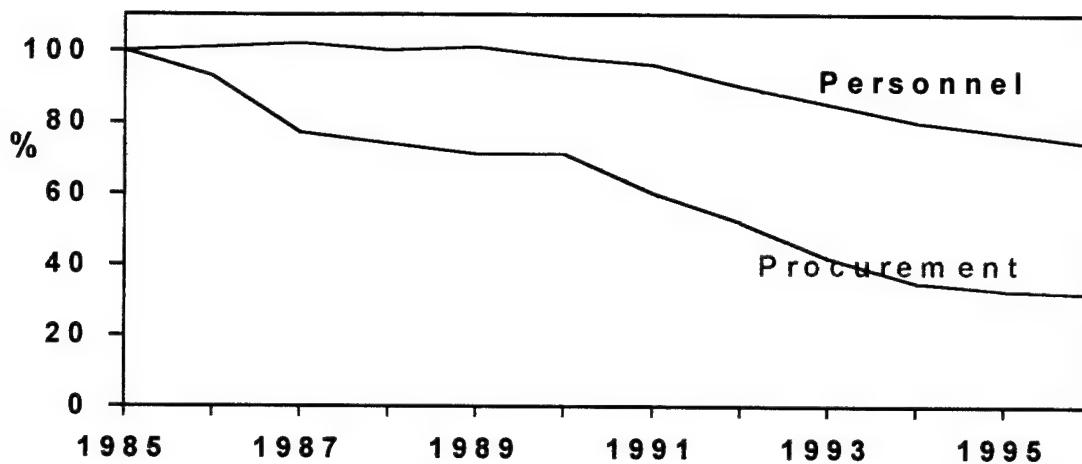


Figure 2

with a smaller decrease in strength results in a larger, less modernized force. As Figure 2 illustrates, DoD budget priorities have created a modernization gap - the difference in procurement budget authority declines in comparison to personnel reductions. While procurement budget authority declined 68 percent since 1985, DoD personnel strength levels only declined twenty-six percent. Stated another way, the modernization gap reflects that in Fiscal Year 1996, DoD will spend 43 percent per service member for modernization that it spent in 1985.⁴⁰

In summary, the BUR steering committee's methodology appears logical but is not supported by careful analysis. As will be described in subsequent sections, the forces selected to implement the chosen strategy do not correlate with the dangers identified for the post-Cold War era. The strategy itself is for the most unlikely scenario, rather than either the most dangerous or most likely threat to U.S. national security. The building blocks for the two MRC requirement are too large to both maintain and modernize, leaving no resources available for other defense requirements such as modernization of transportation assets necessary to deploy the forces in a timely manner.⁴¹ Lastly, when each step is combined to build the multi-year defense plan, the results are an underfunded, aging shell, with more characteristics in common with the "hollow force" of the 1970s than the technologically superior force of the Persian Gulf War.

⁴⁰ William J. Perry, Annual Report to the President and the Congress, (Department of Defense: Washington, DC, February 1995), Personnel Tables, Appendix C, page C-1.

⁴¹ "to meet the requirements of fielding a capable force within the limits of plausible budgets ... substantial further reductions in the size of the BUR force - on the order of an additional 15-20 percent - are inevitable." See Snider, Goure, and Cambone, *ibid.*, 13.

IV. The Policy Process.

In testimony before the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee on March 1, 1994, Secretary of Defense William J. Perry summed up the nature of the defense challenge:

you can look at this, and if you do not like the strategy and want to change it, then that will lead to a different force structure. If you do not like the force structure and want to change it, it will lead you to different costs. If you do not like the cost and want to change it, then you have to go back and change either the force structure or the strategy. My point, though, is that they are interconnected, and you cannot change one without changing the other...⁴²

Secretary Perry is absolutely correct. Force structure, military strategy and defense budgets are interconnected and inseparable. A change in one parameter necessitates a change in another, or both. The point here is that to implement a strategy requires developing a certain force design which dictates a cost which establishes a budget and a military capability. This capability tells the strategist what is possible given a budget, structure and strategy. Once any of these three components is fixed, it largely determines the range of the other components.⁴³ It makes a great deal of difference which of the three components is set first - most often it is the budget. Even during wartime the defense budget must compete with other items in the budget. In peacetime, one year's defense budget rarely differs more than a few percentage points from each other.⁴⁴

The National Security Strategy is developed by the President and his advisors, including the Secretaries of Defense and State, the National Security Advisor and the various economic advisors to the president. It is a civilian, as opposed to military, plan integrating politics, economics, and military goals and objectives. It serves as a statement of the nation's enduring goals, interests, and values. Reflecting its origins as a political document, it is widely accepted that the national security strategy is written in broad conceptual terms to minimize controversy, maximize public support and provide

⁴² Testimony of Secretary of Defense William J. Perry before the Defense Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, reported in U.S. Congress, Department of Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1995, S. Hrg. 103-834, Pt. 1, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994), 17f.

⁴³ Budgets do not determine a specific strategy but a range of policy options. The General Accounting Office tried to determine the linkage and found that "Since funding is not linked to intermediate outputs, such as increased proficiency or mission capable weapon systems, or to ultimate outputs, such as increased readiness, there is no way of determining if the services could achieve the same goals with fewer dollars." Report to the Congress by the Comptroller General of the United States, The Defense Budget: A Look at Budgetary Resources, Accomplishments, and Problems, (Washington, DC: General Accounting Office, April 27, 1983), 24.

⁴⁴ Office of Management and Budget, Budget of the United States, Historical Tables, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994), Table 6.1, 82-88.

the widest latitude for the administration to implement policy during an unforeseen crisis.⁴⁵

From guidance contained in the National Security Strategy and the Defense Planning Guidance, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff prepares the National Military Strategy, which identifies the objectives, tasks, posture, and the size and capability of military forces.⁴⁶ The Defense Planning Guidance is prepared by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and links the planning and programming used by the Joint Staff and the military services.⁴⁷ Similarly, each of the services prepares their respective plan based on the National Military Strategy and the resources available. This process, which begins with the National Security Strategy and ends with the budget allocation, is from the “top-down.”⁴⁸

National Security Strategy Process (top-down ↓)

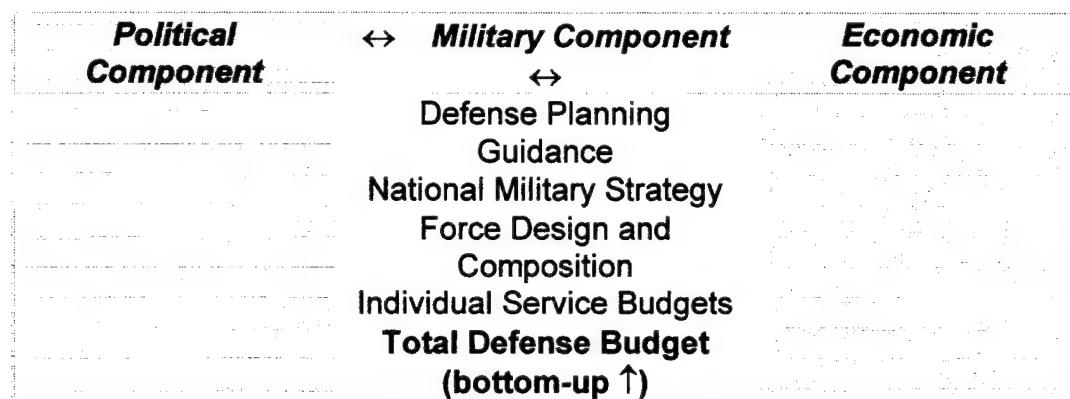


Figure 3

The “bottom-up” approach is the reverse of what most security planners would prefer. For them, strategy should be derived first, from the “top-down.” The planner looks at the world and asks the question, “What are America’s goals and objectives and what are the obstacles, (political, military, economic) to our achieving these goals and objectives?”

⁴⁵ The National Security Strategy was not a public document until the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Defense Department Reorganization Act (Sec. 603) required the president to publish an annual statement. See William J. Clinton, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, July 1994), i.

⁴⁶ John M. Shalikashvili, National Military Strategy of the United States, (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, February 1995), i.

⁴⁷ Charles S. Rousek, ed., Army Command, Leadership, and Management: Theory and Practice, 7th edition, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1992), 4-8.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 10-10.

The real world of security planning is neither bottom-up nor top-down, nor should it be. The bottom-up approach, which is essentially budget constrained force planning, takes the pot of money, divides it up, sees what forces you get, tests it against potential threat scenarios, and then adjusts for other desired outcomes like increased readiness.⁴⁹ Critics argue such an approach places too much emphasis on restricting costs and in the process diminishes the role of strategy. It is too much into the "green eyeshade" mentality of the "bean counters" who know the cost of everything but the value of nothing. It is a process that focuses on the here and now and neglects the future.

The top down approach places too much emphasis on strategy and perceived threats, resulting in too many forces and unachievable or unsustainable budgets. The top-down security planner tends to see danger behind every bellicose word and is prone to over estimate the capability of potential foes. Just as the bottom-up planner is too much accountant and too little visionary strategist, the top-down planner forgets the reality of the budget battle. Regardless of the abundance or absence of danger to U.S. security interests, the fact remains that a dollar spent on national security is a dollar not available for other budget priorities. Governing is about making choices. What the American people demand is that those choices reflect our values and priorities.

As will be explained, the Bottom-Up Review was a budget driven process from the beginning. The committee's name was chosen to express the idea of an analysis of security needs without pre-conceived ideas with literally everything subject to review and negotiation. The resulting strategy was to be built like a house, starting with the foundation and a plan and working up from there. It didn't turn out that way. The BUR turned out to be a familiar, budget-constrained force planning exercise.

⁴⁹ John Thomas Tyler, Jr., *ibid.*, 33.

V. The Four Dangers and U.S. Defense Priorities.

"For the first time in over half a century, no single great power, or coalition of powers, poses a "clear and present danger" to the national security of the United States."⁵⁰

John Lewis Gaddis (1991)

The Bottom-Up Review identified four "new dangers" that the U.S. will face as a result of the end of the Cold War era, as illustrated in Table 4 below. In failing to reinvent the military to meet future U.S. security needs, the BUR instead chose to reinvent the threat to fit the existing military. Three of these four "new dangers" are familiar restatements of old threats. The U.S. has long focused on the dangers of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), on domestic economic concerns, and on deterring regional aggression. The only new threat is that posed by the failure of the democratization movement in Eastern Europe and the republics of the former Soviet Union. Should the move towards democracy fail in these states, an authoritarian power opposed to the United States could seize power and resurrect Cold War relationships.

New Dangers in the Post-Cold War Era

Old Dangers	New Dangers
● Global threat from massive Soviet nuclear and conventional forces	● Spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons ● Potential failure of democratic reform in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere ● Failure to build a strong and growing U.S. economy ● Aggression by major regional powers or ethnic and religious conflict

Source: Report on the Bottom-Up Review, 1.

Table 4

Surprisingly, and largely missed by the BUR, three of the four "new dangers" actually are an argument for reducing defense spending and reorienting military forces onto other national priorities. Only the threat posed by regional aggression is a valid argument for maintaining military preparedness and will be addressed in detail in the

⁵⁰ John Lewis Gaddis, "Toward the Post-Cold War World," *Foreign Affairs*, (Spring 1991), 102.

following section. Each of the other dangers challenge security planners to reorient defense expenditures away from military structure into programs directly aimed at reducing the specific risk posed by a particular danger.

The BUR makes no mention of how U.S. forces will deal with a hostile regional power armed with nuclear weapons. But unlike a conventional threat, a nuclear equipped regional power would pose a serious danger to U.S. vital interests. The spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons has long concerned U.S. security planners. In a recent television interview, Senator Sam Nunn expressed his belief that, "we have to recognize that the number one security challenge the United States has now and probably for years ahead is to prevent the proliferation of these weapons of mass destruction, whether chemical, biological, or nuclear, and scientific knowledge of how to make these..."⁵¹ Accepting Senator Nunn's assertion that proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons is our most serious threat, the BUR focus on regional conflicts to the virtual exclusion of other threats is short-sighted. If so, the BUR is in good company.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union left in its wake fifteen successor states, four armed with nuclear weapons: Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. Nearly four years ago, Congress passed the Nunn-Lugar⁵² bill to provide U.S. assistance in denuclearizing and demilitarizing the former Soviet Union. After a slow start, the program is making progress. Because implementation has only just started, it is difficult to gauge how effective the program will be. Currently, the United States has reached agreement on 38 projects with the four nuclear successor states⁵³. These projects are intended to help the dismantling of strategic and chemical weapons, protecting, controlling, and accounting for fissile material; and providing new employment for former weapons scientist. Last April it was reported that all nuclear warheads in Kazakhstan had been removed and the all nuclear warheads would be removed from Belarus by the end of 1995.⁵⁴

In spite of these successes, funding for Nunn-Lugar is threatened. The Administration's 1996 budget request of \$371 million was cut nearly in half to \$200 million by the Republican controlled House of Representatives.⁵⁵ This reasoning is penny-wise and dollar-foolish. In today's dollars, the United States spent over twelve trillion dollars on defense during the Cold War when the greatest threat to U.S. security was Soviet nuclear weapons. Today, those same weapons still pose the most serious

⁵¹ Sam Nunn on Face the Nation, Sunday, October 15, 1995. Interviewed by Bob Schieffer.

⁵² Formally known as the Cooperative Threat Reduction Act of 1993, Title XII of Public Law 103-160; 107 Stat. 1778; 22 USC 5952(b).

⁵³ Dunbar Lockwood, "Getting Down to Business," in The Bulletin of Atomic Scientist, (January/February 1995), 12-13.

⁵⁴ The International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 1995-1996. (London: Oxford University Press, 1995), 107.

⁵⁵ U.S. House of Representatives, "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1996," House Report 104-131, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office), 255.

threat to U.S. survival. There is an opportunity to help remove these weapons for pennies on the dollar of what it cost to build them or to defend against them. Rather than aggressively pursuing this opportunity to increase our own security, it is being viewed by many as foreign aid and therefore, a prime target for budget cutters. With defense budgets exceeding \$250 billion a year, the \$200 million appropriated for Nunn-Lugar represents about seven hours of the total annual defense budget.

The BUR identifies the U.S. economy as "the final - and in the post-Cold War period, perhaps most important - set of dangers that U.S. strategy must confront."⁵⁶ To meet these dangers to American prosperity, the BUR identifies the five objectives shown in Table 5 below:

National Economic Objectives

- Redirect resources to investments that improve both our defense posture and our competitive position economically.
- Facilitate reinvestment that allows defense industries to shift to nondefense production.
- Support the development of dual-use technologies and encourage the freer flow of technology between the military and civilian sectors.
- Use our long-standing security relationships with key allies and partners to build a bridge to greater economic cooperation and to sustain and enhance global free trade.
- Actively assist nations in making the transition from controlled to market economies.

Source: Les Aspin, Report on the Bottom-Up Review, (Washington, DC: DoD, Oct. 1993), 11.

Table 5

Economic strategy is properly a component of the National Security rather than National Military Strategy. The recognition of economic security dangers by the BUR steering group reinforces the inter-connectivity of politics, economics, and military policy in the formulation of a national grand strategy. Each of these economic objectives is an argument against the BUR emphasis on maintaining a large post-Cold War military structure. For example, the first objective is to increase economic competitiveness. Harvard's Joseph S. Nye, Jr., earlier a Clinton Administration Assistant Secretary of Defense, wrote in his 1990 best seller, Bound To Lead, that, "whereas 95 percent of Japanese students complete high school, only 75 percent of

⁵⁶ Aspin, *ibid.*, 10.

Americans do so.⁵⁷ Yet, the Japanese spent only 1.1 percent of their GDP on defense in 1994, compared to about 4.1 percent for the U.S..⁵⁸ A competitive economic policy would shift resources to programs similar to those of our economic competitors.

If the goal of our economic policy is to increase long-term GNP, reductions in defense spending could be used to fund carefully chosen federal investments. Research has shown that spending on such public facilities as roads and ports, and on education and training, can enhance productivity in the private sector. Alternatively, long-term GNP could be increased by using the funds to reduce the federal deficit. That would in turn increase national savings, resulting in lower interest rates, higher levels of domestic investments, and less foreign indebtedness. The Administration could also choose to return the savings to the taxpayer in the form of either a general tax rate reduction or a program of tax incentives meant to stimulate investment or research and development activities. All three of these choices yield long-term returns -- a higher level of consumption and, in the first two cases, higher productivity for the U.S. economy, fueled by increased domestic investment.⁵⁹

The third danger facing the U.S. in the post-Cold War era is that posed by the failure of democratic reform in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In the long term the proliferation of democracy - particularly in Russia and Ukraine - will enhance U.S. security, both economically and militarily by precluding a return to Cold War style relations. In turn, the establishment of democratic values will profoundly reduce the chances of conflict. Democratic reforms are the best long-term answer to the aggressive nationalism and ethnic hatred unleashed by the end of the Cold War. However, under current plans, we will spend about six times as much maintaining our forces in western Europe as we will in providing aid to eastern Europe.⁶⁰

In summary, the BUR articulates four dangers that the United States is facing in the post-Cold War era. Each of these four dangers is real and individually pose significant danger to U.S. security interests. Collectively they present a monumental challenge to security planners, Defense, and Administration leadership. Three of the challenges cannot be effectively neutralized by increased U.S. military force. In fact, it is quite probable that military force would be counterproductive and weaken rather than strengthen the U.S. position. Current Defense Department obsession with army divisions and navy aircraft carriers will do nothing to counter the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons. A third Seawolf submarine and twenty more B-2 bombers will not increase American economic competitiveness. And certainly, deploying a strategic missile defense will not promote democracy and free market economics in Eastern Europe and the republics of the former Soviet Union.

⁵⁷ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Bound To Lead, The Changing Nature of American Power, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1990), 214.

⁵⁸ The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *ibid.*, for Japan see p. 181, for U.S. see p. 23.

⁵⁹ Congressional Budget Office, The Economic Effects of Reduced Defense Spending, (Washington, DC: Congressional Budget Office, February 1992), x.

⁶⁰ Borosage, *ibid.*, 9.

On the contrary, beyond maintaining sufficient military strength to protect our vital national security interests, excess military spending is a drag on our economy, encourages our allies to shift the burden of defense our way, and encourages potential enemies to maintain a larger than necessary force for their own defense.

To counter the threat posed by the dangers of proliferation, economic stagnation and decline, and the failure of democratic reform movements requires the U.S. to develop military and civilian programs specifically aimed at reducing the specific threat. The generic, one size fits all, response of maintaining a large conventional force simply will not address the dangers and will inevitably result in a more dangerous world.

VI. The Threat from Regional Powers.

Following the Persian Gulf War it is understandable that planners would focus on regional conflicts. It is always easier to refight the last war and to plan for the familiar. However, the BUR assumptions about future conflict with regional powers is flawed on two levels. At the theoretical level, the BUR overestimates the internal stability of regional powers and their ability for external action while ignoring global trends pressuring all states to cooperative action. At a concrete level, the BUR exaggerates the capability of regional military powers, the unpredictability of regional aggression, the likelihood of simultaneous aggression and the amount of force the U.S. will require to unilaterally contain future regional aggression.

The BUR appears to adopt the realist paradigm from international relations theory to describe the potential for conflict with Third World regional powers. The basic premises of realism are that the principal actors in world politics are cohesive states and their primary concern is to survive external threats to their security. Cohesive states, the first premise, are a rarity in the Third World. Internal threats are often of far greater concern to national leaders than external threats and internal conflicts occur with greater frequency. The existence of internal instability does not preclude external aggression, as the Kurdish problem did not keep Iraq out of Kuwait, it certainly diminishes the likelihood of such aggression and the resources available should aggression occur.

For the past twenty years, there has been no shortage of traditional interstate rivalries and conflict in the Third World. But theories widely used in the developed world are not always useful for analyzing those struggles. For example, hegemonic political theories imagine a world where many states have an appetite for aggression, or could quickly develop one. But this idea does not describe Third World reality. Potential hegemons like Brazil, India and Nigeria remain potential, not actual hegemons, that have failed to expand their power by conquering weaker neighbors.

Over the past decade, democracy has made major gains in the Third World. In 1979, 12 of 19 Latin American countries had authoritarian governments. By 1990, all but Cuba had an elected president, although a number of governments remained only nominally democratic. In Africa, nearly three-quarters of the 47 countries south of the Sahara are in the process of political liberalization. In Asia, democracy is making inroads into South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and the Philippines.⁶¹

The BUR expressed the widely embraced view that democracies tend to be more peaceful. If so, these trends should reduce conflict between Third World states that are democratic, while more Third World leaders should face domestic constraints on their ability to wage war. With the exception of North Korea, Pentagon planners have not be able to identify a hostile regional power close to the capabilities that Iraq had in

⁶¹ David Callahan, *ibid.*, 94-112.

1990. Iraq was unique in many ways, particularly in its military capabilities, its proximity to vital U.S. interests, its opportunity for successful aggression, and its leader's self-destructive belligerence. Those Third World countries that do come close to matching both Iraq's military power and its anti-Western hostility are balanced by strong neighbors. Syria is militarily inferior to Israel and faces Turkey and Iraq on its other borders. North Korea has a military edge over South Korea but has half its population and 1/16th its GDP. Libya is substantially weaker than Egypt; Iran remains counterbalanced by Iraq and is technologically inferior to both Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states in key areas, such as air power.

Should aggression occur despite our best diplomatic efforts, there are only a few places in the world where the U.S. should ever intervene with ground troops: Korea, the Persian Gulf, Central America, the Caribbean.⁶² The first two of these meet the BUR definition for a major regional conflict, while the remaining two, even in a worst case scenario, could probably be contained to a lesser regional contingency requiring substantially fewer troops. In other words, to justify the large force retained by the BUR, planners had to assume not only two conflicts simultaneously, but the only two that would require large amounts of U.S. ground troops.

⁶² Ibid., 106.

VII. The Two Conflict Scenario.

To address the threat of regional aggression, the Bottom-Up Review requires that the U.S. maintain the ability to fight and win two major regional conflicts occurring nearly simultaneously and, if necessary, to fight unilaterally.⁶³ Why two conflicts? The requirement originated from a Joint Chiefs of Staff recommendation during the Bush Administration that sufficient forces be retained to wage two conflicts at the same time, although it was not necessarily assumed that aggression would be initiated simultaneously in both regions.⁶⁴ The Joint Chiefs viewed regional threats as the principal immediate danger to U.S. security. Regional threats could be managed with the existing type and mix of forces available. Cold War planning techniques could be easily modified for regional threats. And most importantly, especially after the Persian Gulf War, U.S. planners knew how to fight and win against today's regional powers. Rather than forecast the future nature of conflict and prepare for the next war, BUR planners are maintaining forces designed for the last war.⁶⁵

From an organizational perspective it is easy to see how BUR planners could be seduced into this familiar trap. The threat as we knew it during the Cold War is gone. While many regional powers can cause untold misery and mischief, none pose a serious threat to U.S. security interests in the near term. The problem of course is that the life of a presidential administration is four years and the tenure of senior defense officials is often considerably less. Defense Department civilian appointees often serve less than two years. In the two years since the BUR was released, Les Aspin is gone. BUR steering group chairman John Deutch is gone. JCS chairman Colin Powell is gone, as are many others. The point is that with short tenure, it is natural for defense officials to focus on near term threats. The "not on my watch" mentality will prevent serious focus on longer term threats.

The BUR itself provides two justifications for a two conflict requirement. In a departure from Cold War planning, neither justification is based on a credible threat to U.S. interests. North Korea, Iran, and Iraq just don't measure up to the Cold War threat posed to the U.S. by the Soviet Union, nor are they combined sufficient to justify retaining a large U.S. military force. Instead, planners assumed that a two MRC force was the most that was affordable given projected budgets. As one analyst put it, "the Bottom-Up Review does not so much reinvent the military to meet a changed threat as it reinvents the threat to fit the existing military."⁶⁶ In light of its dominant influence in the BUR, this planning requirement requires careful evaluation.

The first justification for the two conflict requirement is conventional deterrence: "if we were to be drawn into a war in response to the armed aggression of one hostile nation, another could well be tempted to attack its neighbors - especially if it were

⁶³ Aspin, *ibid.*, 7-8.

⁶⁴ Krepenivich, *ibid.*, 21.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁶ Borosage, *ibid.*, 7.

convinced the United States and its allies did not possess the requisite military capability or will to oppose it.⁶⁷ Secretary of Defense William J. Perry explained:

we believe that neither Iraq nor Iran is capable of putting up a force like Iraq had before Desert Storm for years to come. ... We never envisioned that we would get involved in two major regional contingencies. What we wanted was if we got involved in one, that we had a sufficient reserve force that nobody would be tempted to take advantage of that opportunity.⁶⁸

What is the likelihood of a second conflict occurring simultaneously? If history can be our guide, it is not very likely. During the forty-five years of the Cold War, when the U.S. faced a global rival said to be systematically probing American resolve in the far corners of the earth, we were never forced to fight two major conflicts at the same time. Indeed, in all of American history, we have only fought two simultaneous conflicts once, and that was World War II. But even then the U.S. adopted a win-hold-win strategy by prioritizing the defeat of Germany while conducting a holding action in the Pacific against Japan.

Now however, with no identifiable threat, prudence demands that we be prepared to implement a win-win strategy against potential regional adversaries who are not allied, have no global pretensions, and pose no threat to the United States or the core industrial areas of our allies.

Of the three major wars that the United States fought since the end of World War II, it is possible that both Korea and the Persian Gulf War were avoidable had the U.S. made its intentions clear. It is possible that Secretary of State Dean Acheson's speech of January 12, 1950, intended as the enunciation of a new East Asian strategy following the "loss" of China to communism, was responsible for inviting the North Korean attack on South Korea through its exclusion of South Korea from the American "defensive perimeter" in the Pacific.⁶⁹ On July 25, 1990, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq April Glaspie told Saddam Hussein that the United States had "no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait." Hussein interpreted Glaspie's diplomatic language as American indifference to his war plans.⁷⁰ He invaded Kuwait seven days later.

Had Secretary Acheson included Korea in the defensive perimeter and had Ambassador Glaspie told Saddam Hussein that aggression would necessitate a U.S.

⁶⁷ Aspin, *ibid.*, 7.

⁶⁸ testimony Of Secretary Perry before the Senate Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Defense, July 12, 1994. S. Hrg. 103-834, Pt. 2, 525.

⁶⁹ John Lewis Gaddis, The Long Peace, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 72. See also Henry Kissinger, Diplomacy, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 475. Kissinger notes that General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Commander of U.S. Pacific forces, placed Korea outside the U.S. defense perimeter nearly a year before Acheson's speech.

⁷⁰ Sidney Blumenthal, "April's Bluff," *The New Republic*, August 5, 1991, 8-9.

response, both conflicts may have been avoided. Even if not, a perceived lack of American interest was certainly a contributing factor to the causes of the conflicts. From this we can conclude that in addition to its military capability, history suggests that willingness to defend vital interests may play a critical role in deterring regional aggression. Therefore, to prevent future conflicts, the U.S. must define and clearly articulate its vital interests.⁷¹

The second justification for the two MRC requirement is to minimize risk: "sizing our forces for two major regional conflicts provides a hedge against the possibility that a future adversary might one day confront us with a larger-than-expected threat, and then turn out, through doctrinal or technological innovation, to be more capable than we expect, or enlist the assistance of other nations to form a coalition against our interests."⁷² This appears to be a more defensible justification.

There is probably no way to stop the proliferation of advanced technology weaponry to future regional aggressors. The advantage that the U.S. led coalition forces demonstrated in the Persian Gulf War, therefore, may not be sustainable without significant investment in weapons research. However, the BURs conflict scenarios do not envision such an innovative adversary: instead, the BUR scenarios describe "an armor-heavy, combined arms offensive against the outnumbered forces of a neighboring state."⁷³ As such, these scenarios do not anticipate any innovation on the part of a future aggressor but instead reflect standard planning of the Cold War period.

Further, the BUR scenarios do not reflect lessons learned from the Persian Gulf War. Clearly, future aggressors will not replicate the Iraqi strategy (massed tank armies are not the way to take over small countries that happen to be American allies).⁷⁴ It is far better to launch ambiguous takeovers behind the smoke screen of liberation movements or uncontrolled dissident groups or native putsch-makers. The Indian Minister of Defense hypothesized that the real lesson of the Persian Gulf War was to "never fight the U.S. without nuclear weapons."⁷⁵ This may be so. How would Saudi Arabia have reacted to the prospect of massing U.S. troops within its border if Iraq had nuclear weapons? Or, what would have been the Arab community response if Iraq had used a nuclear weapon against Israel?

There are other lessons of the Persian Gulf War that the BUR ignores. Certainly, a future aggressor will know to quickly finish what he starts and not allow the U.S. time to build up forces. A future aggressor may also intermingle military operations with its civilian population to limit the application of U.S. firepower.

⁷¹ See Kissinger, *ibid.*, 810f. Kissinger argues, "In the next century, American leaders will have to articulate for their public a concept of the national interest and explain how that interest is served...A clear definition of the national interest needs to be an equally essential guide to American policy."

⁷² Aspin, *ibid.*, 7f.

⁷³ Aspin, *ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁴ Cohen, "Down the Hatch," *ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁵ Borosage, *ibid.*, 13.

Similarly, mining and sabotaging the ports where American forces disembark can and should be anticipated. Or, future aggressors may find other ways, such as Mohamed Farah Aideed demonstrated in Somalia, to engage U.S. forces short of conventional means.

If, as the BUR suggests, a regional power will be more formidable, an "Iraq on steroids"⁷⁶ as Andrew Krepinevich describes, it will probably be based on technological innovation -- a qualitative rather than quantitative force improvement. None of our potential adversaries, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Libya, or Cuba, possesses a modern industrial base and none spends more than \$6 billion per year on its military. As shown in Table 6 below, collectively these five potential regional adversaries spent less than \$15 billion on their military in 1993 - about

1993 Regional Power Defense Expenditures
(Constant FY 1995 \$)

Country	Military Spending
Iraq	\$2.6 Billion
Iran	\$4.9 Billion
North Korea	\$5.3 Billion
Libya	\$1.1 Billion
Cuba	\$0.4 Billion
TOTAL	\$14.3 Billion

Source: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 1995-1996, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), 133-4, 140, 183, 213.

Table 6

five percent of what the U.S. spent. Each of these countries field forces with dated equipment, and are largely dependent on imports and external supply. None poses a military threat to the American people or to our core industrial or trading partners. We could respond to aggression on the part of these potential adversaries at our convenience after rallying international opinion, gaining UN authority, applying sanctions, mobilizing and training our reserve forces, building domestic support, and winning congressional authorization. The bottom line is that under virtually any conceivable scenario, the one thing U.S. forces have is time. During the Cold War, the Selective Service System was tasked to provide the first inductees 13 days after mobilization. Following the BUR, DoD extended the reporting time to 193 days. What this means is that the first draftees would not be required to report for training until more than six months into a conflict and would not be available as a trained replacement for 12-18 months into a conflict.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Krepinevich, *ibid.*, 22.

⁷⁷ Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management memorandum to Director of Selective Service, 16 November 1994.

The BUR retains a force structure designed for refighting the Persian Gulf War rather than one adapting to the technologically improved armies of future regional hegemons. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that these planning requirements have been invented to justify the forces and structures we have rather than to cope with the potential threats we face. This requirement to wage two conflicts on no notice with an armor-heavy force is the same assumption as during the Cold War and is not particularly relevant today.

Worse yet, by focusing so heavily on the forces necessary to fight two conflicts simultaneously, we neglect the fundamental principles of war, resulting in a force with fists of iron but feet of clay. During the Cold War, the army maintained 5 1/3 combat divisions on the ground in Western Europe. There was no concern about how to get those divisions into the fight, they were already there. Replacements and reinforcements would come from the United States but the U.S. was prepared to resort to nuclear weapons to stop an invasion. Such a scenario did not envision a long war, or long world history after that. The point is that little thought and less planning went into the deployment of forces from the United States. All that has changed. Army ground forces are now largely stationed within the continental United States and are totally dependent on Air Force transport and Navy sealift to get them to the distant theater of operations. The BUR recognized the need for substantial enhancements to strategic mobility, relying heavily on DoD's 1991 Mobility Requirements Study. The problem is that the Mobility Requirements Study identifies the transport requirements necessary for one conflict, not two nearly simultaneous conflicts. The BUR simply assumes that the airlift and sealift will be available for the second conflict as soon as deployment to the first is complete.

A study by the Lockheed-Martin Corporation pointed out the fallacy of this logic. As soon as forces are deployed to a region, a portion of the transportation assets becomes required to sustain the force. As more force is deployed, more transportation is required simply to sustain it. Lockheed-Martin estimates that even if all BUR recommended enhancements are procured (a bold assumption in fiscally tight times), sustaining the forces deployed to the first region will reduce the assets available to the second to the point that the U.S. will only have the capability to deploy and sustain sixty percent of its force to the second region. Lockheed-Martin further estimates to deploy the BUR force to two regions within the timelines projected by the BUR will require twice the investment planned for strategic lift.⁷⁸ Given all of these considerations, it would seem that the burden of proof for maintaining a force structure capable of "decisive victory in two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts" has yet to be

⁷⁸ Unpublished, but widely presented briefing titled, "Military Force Structure Planning Issues," prepared by the Fort Worth, TX office of Lockheed-Martin. The analysis suggests that the forces planned are sufficient for two MRCs, but the strategic lift is only half of required capability and requirements are underfunded \$20-25 billion per year. Shifting funding priorities to strategic lift within existing budgets requires the equivalent of a ten percent across the board cut in all service budgets.

met.⁷⁹ The time is right for the U.S. to abandon the requirement to fight two geographically separated conflicts unilaterally and concurrently.

As a minimum we know that we tend to deter the wars we plan for and fight the unexpected war. Desert Storm Commander General H. Norman Schwarzkopf wrote in his autobiography: "If someone had asked me on the day I graduated from West Point, in June 1956, where I would fight for my country during my years of service, I'm not sure what I would have said. But I'm damn sure I would *not* have said Vietnam, Grenada, and Iraq."⁸⁰ The point is that the more we focus on a particular threat and bring our resources to bear, the less likely that conflict will even materialize. We need not maintain separate forces to deter both an Iraq and a North Korea. One force, well trained and modernized, will do the job.

Patrick Garrity and Sharon K. Weiner recently summarized the U.S. security challenge as ceasing to think about justifying military capability:

primarily in terms of deterring a specific, ill-intentioned adversary. The central strategic challenge for the foreseeable future will not be deterrence, but rather fostering political conditions in which relations among the great industrial powers remain friendly, and preventing what competition does emerge from spilling over into the military domain. In many policy areas, such as supporting peaceful and democratic change in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, this will not involve U.S. military power. But the continued existence of substantial U.S. military capabilities may be essential to reassure other great powers that they need not (re)enter the military arena in a major way. This will not be an easy case to make to Congress and the American people, but it is likely to be more persuasive than the search for nonexistent threats.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Krepenivich, *ibid.*, 28.

⁸⁰ Schwarzkopf, N. Norman, It Doesn't Take A Hero, (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 502f.

⁸¹ Patrick J. Garrity & Sharon K. Weiner, "U.S. Defense Strategy After the Cold War," in Brad Roberts, ed., *U.S. Security in an Uncertain Era*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993, p.32.

VIII. Campaign Politics.

*"No wonder Americans hate politics when, year in and year out, they hear politicians make promises that won't come true because they don't even mean them - campaign fantasies that win elections but don't get nations moving again."*⁸²

Presidential Candidate Bill Clinton (1992)

President Bush enjoyed a good relationship with the military throughout his presidency. No doubt his own military service as the Navy's youngest bomber pilot during World War II contrasted favorably with the public image of a young Bill Clinton avoiding military service during the Vietnam War. Both men are products of their own generation, facing a different war, different public attitudes, and not surprisingly making different choices. None of this however, played much of a role in the 1992 presidential election. The electorate largely ignored both candidates personal history and focused on the economic crisis and the direction America was heading.

Clinton's relationship with the military was never strong. There was more to it than disagreement over service during Vietnam. Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, Commentator Pat Buchanan, former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and a host of others successfully avoided Vietnam-era service, yet maintained positive relationships with the military. Besides, with the notable exception of the senior leadership, only a relatively small percentage of the military still on active duty had seen service in Vietnam themselves. Most were simply too young. Whatever its basis, the military, by and large, did not hold Governor Clinton in high regard. Not surprisingly, Clinton reciprocated by showing little interest in things military, preferring the more familiar arena of domestic politics.

There are often several choices between defense contractors for the acquisition of a major weapons system. Choosing between building a nuclear attack submarine at the Newport News Shipbuilding Company in Newport News, Virginia or at the General Dynamics' Electric Boat Division in Groton, Connecticut has significant domestic political ramifications. This significance was not lost on either presidential candidate as each advocated the procurement of particular weapons systems that had more to do with advancing election prospects than national security objectives. In the weeks before the election, President Bush approved selling Taiwan 150 advanced F-16 fighters made in his adopted home state of Texas, a state critical to his reelection.⁸³ Similarly, Clinton endorsed the \$2.4 billion Seawolf submarine made in Groton, Connecticut and the V-22 Osprey, tilt-rotor wing aircraft, made in Pennsylvania and

⁸² Candidate Bill Clinton in a speech to the Detroit Economic Club, August 21, 1992, reported in *Congressional Quarterly*, February 20, 1993, 384.

⁸³ Paul Proctor, "Taiwan Fighter Sales Plans Curb China Transport Deals," *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, September 28, 1992, 24.

Texas. The Bush Defense Department had earlier tried to kill both the Seawolf⁸⁴ and the V-22,⁸⁵ but in one of the more notable campaign flip-flops, Vice President Dan Quayle announced Bush's support for the \$25 billion V-22 only 10 days before the election.⁸⁶

Other domestic issues relating to the military surfaced during the campaign, the most notable of which was the military exclusion policy for homosexuals. Not surprisingly, both candidates were polar opposites on the issue with Bush resisting change and Clinton advocating non-discrimination. This issue itself played a relatively minor role in the campaign but created a firestorm of controversy shortly thereafter. In his first post-election address on Veteran's Day 1992, only a week after his election, President-elect Clinton acknowledged his intent to comply with his campaign promise to lift the ban on gays serving in the military. Although he avoided the gay issue in his remarks to an audience of uniformed and retired officers, the President-elect strongly reaffirmed his campaign pledge afterward, saying, "I don't think (sexual) status alone, in the absence of some destructive behavior, should disqualify people."⁸⁷

Conservatives were outraged. Discussion of Clinton's pledge began to dominate and then to drown out other domestic agenda items. The President-elect appeared genuinely surprised at the depth of the opposition. Georgia Senator Sam Nunn, the Senate's leading defense expert broke with Clinton over the issue and publicly expressed doubt about the president-elect's ability to win congressional approval for a policy change. As Clinton assumed office in January 1993, he was faced with the dilemma of breaking a widely reported campaign promise or further alienating both the military and powerful forces within his own party, such as Sam Nunn.⁸⁸

President Clinton's campaign pledges to restructure the military, cut defense spending, support particular weapons systems that many considered Cold War relics, and to remove barriers to gays serving in the military, combined with an already rocky relationship with the military to set the stage for the Bottom-Up Review. What proved to be at stake was much more than just good or bad relations with the military or gay rights organizations. As the Defense Department launched the bottom-up's strategic analysis of security needs for the post-Cold War era, nothing less than the domestic political agenda of the new administration was weighing in the balance.

⁸⁴ George Hager, "Defense Spending Dispute Stalls Rescissions Bill," *Congressional Quarterly*, May 16, 1992, 1328.

⁸⁵ John D. Morrocco, "Cheney Stands Firm on V-22 Cancellation Despite IDA Study," *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, September 9, 1990, 28.

⁸⁶ Eric Smith, "Timings of Big Pact Aids Bush in Pennsylvania," *New York Times*, October 23, 1992, A14.

⁸⁷ Michael Weisskopf, "Clinton Backs Early Military Retirement, Strong Defense, Better Health Care for Vets and POW Action Pledged," November 12, 1995, *The Washington Post*.

⁸⁸ Stephen Bair, "Hill Backs Gay Ban," *The Washington Post*, January 25, 1993, downloaded from Legi-Slate, article number 173121.

When Candidate Bill Clinton made the remarks at the beginning of this section, two months before the 1992 election, he was reminding voters that George Bush said "Read my lips, no new taxes" in 1988 and went on to negotiate a 1990 budget deal with \$146 billion in new taxes. As it turned out, Clinton was painting himself into a similar corner that would threaten his entire domestic political agenda during the early days of his administration.

The president's number one priority was to reinvigorate the economy.⁸⁹ Even before taking office, Clinton hosted a two day economic summit in Little Rock and promised to "focus like a laser" on the economy and to cut the deficit in half by 1996.⁹⁰ To accomplish these objectives would require an united administration, wide public and bi-partisan congressional support. This would not be easy for a president elected by only 43 percent of the popular vote. The immediate problem was that the "gays in the military" issue was dominating the agenda and Clinton had already backed away from fulfilling other campaign pledges such as the middle-class tax cut. Breaking the tax cut pledge was argued as an economic necessity and responsible leadership since deficit projections had worsened since Clinton first made the tax cut pledge.⁹¹ No similar easy out was available on the gay issue. The President had the authority to unilaterally lift the ban though Congress could intervene and write the ban into law. Either way, Clinton was obliged to act and could not afford to be perceived as abandoning other campaign pledges.

Nine days into the new administration, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin asked for six months to work out a compromise policy that could be supported by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and would not be overturned by congressional action.⁹² This move bought the administration valuable time to refocus the political agenda on the domestic economy. In reality however, the six month delay in resolving the issue only served to create a confluence of events that would further weaken the administration's attempt to reform the military for the post-Cold War era. The six month delay in resolving the gay policy meant the issue would resurface at the same time the Defense Department was to announce the results of the Bottom-Up Review.

During the 1992 presidential campaign, Candidate Bill Clinton pledged to "restructure our military forces for a new era."⁹³ In his first State of the Union address, only weeks after taking office, President Clinton pledged to "responsibly reduce the defense budget" and that the U.S. military would remain "the best trained, best

⁸⁹ Bob Woodward, The Agenda, Inside the Clinton White House, (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 11.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 42.

⁹¹ Chuck Alston, "The President's Position on Taxes: Reversal or 'Healthy Evolution'?" in *Congressional Quarterly*, February 20, 1993, 384-386. See also David S. Cloud, "Crafting an Economic Package: A Reality Check for Clinton," in *Congressional Quarterly*, January 16, 1993, 118.

⁹² Pat Towell, "Campaign Promise, Social Debate Collide on Military Battlefield," *Congressional Quarterly*, January 30, 1993.

⁹³ Speech delivered by Governor Bill Clinton, "A New Covenant for American Security," at Georgetown University on December 12, 1991, unpublished.

equipped, best prepared fighting force in the world.”⁹⁴ Even without the gay controversy, fulfilling these and other pledges would not be easy. With the priority on stimulating the economy, cuts to defense could be counterproductive. Reducing the deficit probably requires an equal reduction in defense spending. Building expensive new weapons systems requires budget increases as does maintaining readiness and modernization programs. Abandoning weapons projects pledged during the campaign risked further alienating an already suspicious military and also alienating key congressional supporters. Restructuring the military, especially in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, could place more emphasis on expensive, high tech equipment, resulting in a smaller, but more expensive military force.

Clinton Campaign Promises:

Defense Promises:	Domestic Political Promises:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce Defense Spending ● Restructure the Military for a New Era ● Lift the Ban on Gays in the Military ● Build the \$25 Billion V-22 Osprey ● Build the \$2.4 Billion Seawolf Submarine ● Maintain the Best Trained, Best Equipped, Best Prepared Fighting Force in the World 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Restore America's Economy ● Health Care Reform ● End Welfare as We Know It ● Middle-Class Tax Cut ● Economic Stimulus Package ● Campaign Finance Reform

Table 7

Table 7 shows an itemization of several of the more prominent pledges made by President Clinton during the campaign. In the early days of the administration, much public attention was focused on campaign promises and it was important that the new president not be perceived as abandoning his promises as soon as the election was over. While it is not possible to fulfill all the pledges, it was more important that promises remain unfulfilled rather than broken. The right side of the table lists domestic promises and represents the administration's higher priorities. The left side were important to the extent that they helped accomplish items on the domestic agenda.⁹⁵

To sort out these conflicting priorities, Secretary Aspin established the Bottom-Up Review (BUR) steering group in March 1993 and appointed Under Secretary of Defense John Deutch as chairman. The BURs mission was clear enough: to conduct a “comprehensive review of the nation’s defense strategy, force structure, modernization,

⁹⁴ President Bill Clinton, “State of the Union 1993,” delivered to the Joint Session of Congress, Washington, DC, February 17, 1993.

⁹⁵ Michael Kramer, “Bash Him for the Right Reasons,” *Time*, January 25, 1993, 36.

infrastructure, and foundations.”⁹⁶ To insure consensus, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and each of the services provided steering group representatives.

Search for a new strategic concept was short-lived. Rather than providing a strategic vision for security policy in the 21st Century, the BUR bought the new administration a truce with the military at the cost of “the peace dividend” and the abandonment of more radical reform. The BUR report endorses a limited, near term plan to refight simultaneous Persian Gulf Wars with a downsized military that in all relevant respects resembled the force then in existence. Not surprisingly, the BUR also broke with previous Defense policy and provided a strategic justification for the Seawolf submarine and V-22 Osprey campaign promises.⁹⁷

True to its name, the Bottom-Up Review started with administration budget numbers and from that, derived a force and strategy. In the end, far from making deep cuts in defense, the BUR cut less than 7% off the Bush plan, a reduction of \$91 billion over five years in a \$1.325 trillion program.⁹⁸ Even though Secretary Aspin explicitly denied that BUR was constrained budgeting, the fact remains that the Administration’s budget numbers were released several months before completion of the Bottom-Up Review⁹⁹

The BUR steering group could not have done differently. To ask the services to advocate deep defense cuts is no less difficult than asking Congress to pass campaign finance reform or to institute term limits. Reform, if it comes, will likely be forced from the outside. For the Clinton Administration, a truce with the military would quell the gays in the military controversy and allow the President to bring his domestic agenda to the attention of the American people at the relatively modest cost of a percent or two of the federal budget. Besides, hadn’t Bush Administration CIA Director Robert Gates testified in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War that he “did not expect threats to the U.S. to arise within the next decade?” In that case, it really didn’t matter what the military did during Clinton’s term of office.

American University professor Jeff Fishel summarized the new president’s dilemma in his book Presidents & Promises : “Incumbent presidents face new issues, new problems, new contingencies that cannot be anticipated from the campaign. They must be willing to change, to compromise, to be flexible about some of their campaign promises; if they are unwilling to alter their course, and unable to persuade voters that it is essential to do so, they will down their party and themselves at the next election.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Les Aspin, Report on the Bottom-Up Review, *ibid.*, iii.

⁹⁷ Aspin, *ibid.*, for Seawolf see 55-57; for Osprey see 69-70. See also Borosage, *ibid.*, 7.

⁹⁸ Aspin, *ibid.*, 108.

⁹⁹ Kaufmann, “Hollow Forces,” *ibid.*, 26.

¹⁰⁰ quoted in Chuck Alston, “The President’s Position on Taxes: Reversal or ‘Healthy Evolution’?” in *Congressional Quarterly*, February 20, 1993, 386.

It was a simple choice for the new president and his secretary of defense. They could stick with campaign pledges, fight with the Joint Chiefs of Staff over the defense budget and alienate key congressional supporters. Or, they could seek a compromise that would put military issues out of the public eye and allow the administration to promote its domestic agenda. President Clinton rightly chose the latter.

IX. Bureaucratic Politics.

According to Graham T. Allison, most policy analysts think about and explain governmental behavior in terms of the rational actor model in which policy choices are arrived at through a deliberate and logical process to achieve given objectives.¹⁰¹ In other words, rational people clearly identify their objectives, the options available, and the likely consequences of each alternative choice before reaching a decision. While the rational actor model can usefully describe many defense decisions, it does not appear to work well in explaining the BUR recommendations. For example, during the first step in the BUR methodology, four dangers for the post-Cold War era were identified. A rational actor would be expected to design a force to counter the specific threats posed by each of these dangers. The BUR did not do this. Instead, by recommending a large force capable of unilateral action, the BUR may have created a fifth danger by simultaneously encouraging our allies to shirk their defense responsibilities and by challenging potential adversaries to build up their forces. Likewise, choosing a force too large to both keep ready and to modernize reduces over time the American technological advantage. As other forces approach U.S. capabilities, they may feel up to the challenge of confronting U.S. forces.

Recognizing that the rational actor model does not describe every situation, Allison offered two other frames of reference: an organizational process model and a bureaucratic politics model. The organizational process model is attributed to Herbert Simon and is based on the concept of bounded rather than comprehensive rationality. It is characterized by factoring or splitting up problems, the parceling out of problem parts to various organizational units, and the search for satisfactory rather than optimal solutions.¹⁰² The organizational process model describes the behavior of organizations solving short-run problems rather than long-range issues and appears no better at describing the BUR results than the rational actor model.

Allison's third model, the bureaucratic politics model, builds on the organizational process model, but instead of assuming control by leaders at the top, the bureaucratic politics model hypothesizes intensive competition among the decision-making units, and governmental policies are the result of bargaining among the components of a bureaucracy. The players are guided by no consistent strategic master plan, but rather by conflicting conceptions of national, bureaucratic, and personal goals.¹⁰³

The bureaucratic politics model provides a better explanation and insight into the BUR policy recommendations. For example, the size of the BUR force is better explained by bureaucratic bargaining than by the rational design to counter perceived threats. One would expect that in a situation of bureaucratic bargaining among equal

¹⁰¹ Graham T. Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis, (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1971), 4-5, 10-11.

¹⁰² Ibid., 71-72.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 144-145.

policy actors, for the result of negotiations to be, not a radical restructuring but marginal change. As identified previously, the BUR force closely resembles the Cold War force, only smaller. This downsizing can be attributed to the bureaucratic negotiations that prevented deeper cuts or more radical redesign.

Budget Allocation by Service

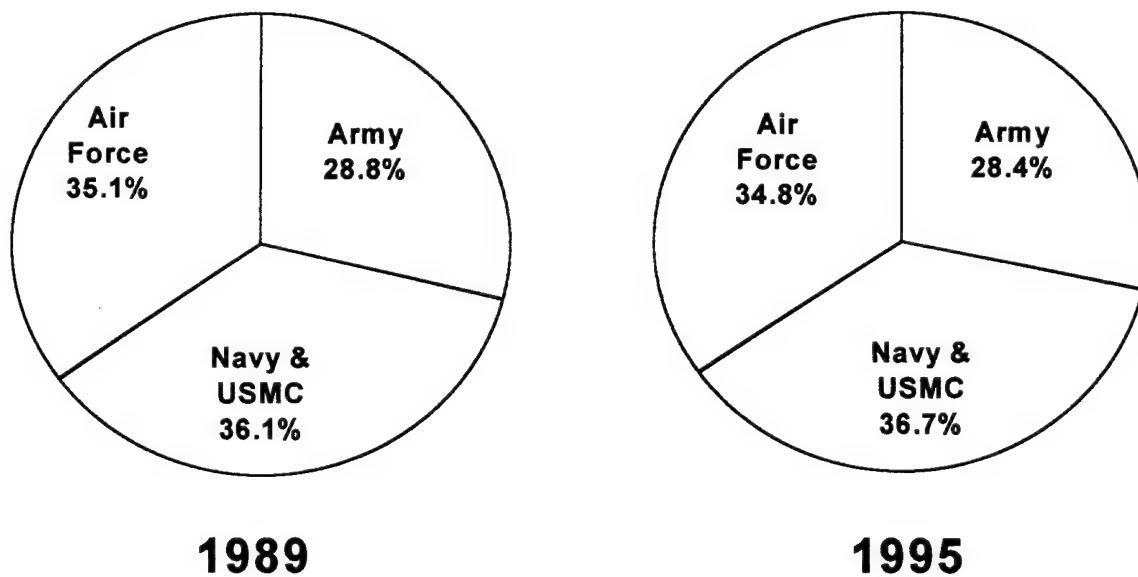


Figure 4

Considering that the administration budget numbers were made public months before the Bottom-Up Review completed its work, it is logical to assume that in the choice between strategy, forces, and budgets, that the budget was set first. Following a bureaucratic politics paradigm, you can predict that budget allocation among competing actors would remain fairly constant, in spite of the disappearance of key missions. The Air Force's strategic missile and long range bomber, the Navy's nuclear submarine, and the Army's European focus arguably were all in decline. Yet, the way the budget pie was allocated between services changed very little. For example, as shown in Figure 4, when the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, the services' portion of the Defense budget was allocated as follows: Army, 28.8%; Navy and Marine Corps, 36.1%; and Air Force, 35.1%. The post-BUR 1995 budget allocation was virtually unchanged with 28.4% to the Army, 36.7% to the Navy and 34.8% to the Air Force.¹⁰⁴ Likewise, even though force structure cuts are required because of the declining

¹⁰⁴ Department of Defense, Office of the Comptroller, *ibid.*, table 6-10, 93. Percentages were calculated by deducting budget authority allocated to the Department of Defense and the Defense Agencies and treating the remaining service budgets as the proportion of the Defense budget allocated to the uniform services.

budget pie, bureaucratic politics would predict no appreciable change in the role or mission of the individual services. For example, you would not predict the Army to assume all ground combat roles from the Marine Corps or for the Air Force to assume all close air support for ground forces, even though these issues are frequently discussed.

Following the parameters of the bureaucratic politics model, we can hypothesize different objectives for the BUR steering committee than those articulated by Secretary Aspin. These objectives include: (1) to gain consensus among the military services; (2) to design a force to fit within the overall administration budget constraints; and, (3) to provide strategic justification for compliance with administration campaign pledges. From this perspective, the BUR accomplished exactly what was intended. Also, it explains why, in spite of its obvious shortcomings, the Administration rejects all suggestions to change the BUR.

X. Summary.

Secretary Aspin established the Bottom-Up Review steering committee to conduct a "comprehensive review of the nation's defense strategy, force structure, modernization, infrastructure, and foundations." Sadly, these high goals were not achieved. The steering committee correctly described the post-Cold War environment that the U.S. faces, but proceeded to propose a military force ill-designed to confront the four dangers identified: proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; democratic reform in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union; dangers to the U.S. economy; and, the threat of regional aggressors. Only the threat posed by regional aggression is confronted by the BUR force.

The rational actor and organizational process models of government decision making do not explain the results of the BUR methodology. Only the bureaucratic politics model provides insight into this process. First however, it is necessary to establish the environment the new administration faced. These environmental factors included: the president's preference for domestic over military policy; the president's already strained relations with the military over his avoidance of service during the Vietnam War; the congressional, public and Joint Chiefs of Staff resistance to a change in the gays in the military policy; the pressure to fulfill conflicting campaign promises; the breaking of campaign promises even before the inauguration; and, the belief that no threat could endanger the United States within a decade. Each of these environmental factors combined to forge a compromise that keeps the military force larger today than necessary, at the cost of being unable to adequately modernize the force for the future.

Viewed from the bureaucratic politics paradigm, the Bottom-Up Review produced a plan agreeable to the military services and defense supporters in Congress, relegated defense issues to the back burners to make room for public consideration of domestic agenda items, and initially kept Defense within administration budget constraints. While there has been some movement by both the Clinton Administration and Congress on budget levels, the Bottom-Up recommendations reflect a consensus acceptable to the parties involved. Therefore, regardless of the validity and severity of external criticism, there is no incentive for the Administration to reject the BUR.

XI. Recommendations.

For the United States to exert more influence in the poorer and less stable regions of the world, to head off threats before they arise, and to increase our economic competitiveness with our trading partners, national security resources must be reallocated. A sensible objective to aim for over the next few years is to reduce the active duty forces to a level that can handle one Desert Storm-sized contingency with sufficient active forces left over to conduct a large-scale humanitarian operation or any other minor intervention. There are a number of ways to do this without endangering U.S. vital interests.

First of all, the U.S. needs to define and articulate exactly what it considers vital to U.S. security interests and determine in advance how far it is willing to go to defend those interests. If the United States is willing to commit military forces to repel an aggression against a U.S. ally, it should say it, plan for it, and be prepared to do it should the crisis arise. This is the nature of deterrence. Diplomatic vagueness has its place in international relations but the clearer the United States is about its intentions, the more a potential aggressor will think twice before taking on the U.S. military. Former Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph S. Nye Jr. calls this the "crystal ball effect."¹⁰⁵ American resolve would give a potential aggressor a crystal ball with which to see the outcome of any conflict with the U.S. military. If Saddam Hussein had been given a crystal ball vision of American resolve by Ambassador Glaspie instead of the vague "no opinion," would he still have invaded Kuwait? My guess is no.

Second, having defined American vital interests, the United States should design a force structure to defend those interests and to eliminate from the active force any structure not needed or deployable within projected time frames. Most Defense officials and BUR planners will argue that is exactly what the Bottom-Up Review did. Unfortunately, they would be wrong. Navy aircraft carriers is a case in point. The BUR identified a requirement for 4-5 navy aircraft carrier battle groups for each MRC.¹⁰⁶ Even assuming a worst case, this should indicate a total carrier requirement of no more than ten. The BUR's recommendation of twelve lacks any serious military justification. The extra two carriers are required, according to Secretary Aspin, to "show the flag."¹⁰⁷ Reducing the force to 10 carriers, with fewer escorts, would serve just as well and would not impair the ability of U.S. forces to fight two conflicts simultaneously. Is it realistic to assume that if the United States was engaged fighting two conflicts simultaneously, something it has done only once in its history, that we would divert aircraft carrier battle groups to distant regions simply to show the flag? If showing the flag remains important, other Navy surface ships could be substituted and achieve the same effect.

¹⁰⁵ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History, (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), 123.

¹⁰⁶ Aspin, *ibid.*, 19.

¹⁰⁷ DoD Press Conference, September 1, 1993, announcing the results of the Bottom-Up Review.

In 1990, before the breakup of the Soviet Union, Senator Sam Nunn, then Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, recommended a force of 10 to 12 carriers. During the 1992 campaign, in a quickly forgotten promise, President Clinton called for a Navy with 10 carriers. Last year, a Congressional Budget Office study estimated that \$12.5 billion could be saved over the next five years by reducing the fleet to 10 carrier battle groups.¹⁰⁸

Third, the entire concept of strategic lift needs to be reassessed. If the Lockheed-Martin study is correct, the U.S. simply will not have enough airlift and sealift available to deploy and sustain forces to two conflicts simultaneously. If we cannot get the forces to the battle, there is little point in training, maintaining, and modernizing them, especially as part of the active force. This is particularly true of Army ground forces stationed within the continental United States. These forces are totally dependent on the Air Force and Navy for transportation to the conflict.

The Mobility Requirements Study and the BUR recommend acquisition of sufficient airlift and sealift to deploy the one MRC ground force to the theater of operations within seventy-five days. Allowing for turn-around time, the earliest transportation will be available to deploy forces to a second conflict, should one occur, is ninety days - the same time the BUR estimates that it will take to ready Army National Guard combat units for deployment. Therefore, eliminating from the active force any ground combat structure not capable of being deployed within ninety days could result in substantial savings without increasing security risks.

Current plans call for the Army to reduce to ten active divisions, a total of thirty brigades, by 1997. Two divisions of two brigades each are forward deployed in Germany and one division, also of two brigades, is forward deployed in South Korea. Within the United States are seven active duty divisions, including one in Hawaii. At most, the BUR estimates that one conflict will require five army divisions. Assuming that neither the forces currently in Germany or South Korea are part of the conflict, two of the seven army divisions stationed in the United States could be either transferred to the Army National Guard or eliminated from the force. Eliminating two of these divisions from the active force and relying on Army National Guard divisions for the second conflict, could save \$12 billion from the Future Year's Defense Plan (FYDP).¹⁰⁹

Fourth, the Persian Gulf War was won in the air where American technological superiority is our greatest asset. We should not give up this advantage. Rather than reducing Air Force tactical fighter wings as recommended by the BUR, tactical fighter wings in both the active Air Force and the reserves should be expanded to compensate for smaller ground forces and fewer carrier battle groups. Air wings can quickly be

¹⁰⁸ Congressional Budget Office, Reducing the Deficit: Spending and Revenue Options, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994), 32.

¹⁰⁹ The DoD Total Force Policy Report to Congress (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 1990) estimated the cost for an active duty heavy division at \$1.6 billion in 1990 dollars on an annual recurring basis. Similar Army National Guard divisions cost less than \$400 million.

deployed to troubled regions to reinforce U.S. allies and to protect our vital interests. Reducing ground forces and carrier battle groups while augmenting Air Force tactical fighter wings would provide virtually the same combat capability as the BUR force, but at significantly lower cost.¹¹⁰ However, such a reallocation of mission is not achievable through bureaucratic politics bargaining.

Fifth, maintaining forces beyond what can be deployed when needed does not increase U.S. security. Rather, maintaining a larger force than necessary diverts resources from higher priority requirements. In this case, too large a force diverts funds better spent to modernize the remaining force. Maintaining a smaller force at the highest states of readiness and modernization will be the best guarantee that they will not be used. Relying on reserve forces for the second MRC, should one occur, will provide the resources necessary to provide the technologically superior force for decisive victory. Under such a system, it is imperative that the National Command Authority commit to activation of reserve forces immediately upon deciding to commit active forces from the United States to a region of potential or actual hostilities. Post-mobilization training requirements have been identified to insure that these forces can be prepared before any transportation from the first MRC is available to deploy them to a second conflict.

Lastly, and regardless of who wins, following the 1996 presidential election the BUR needs to be discarded and replaced by a more realistic assessment of the U.S. military requirements for the post-Cold War era.

¹¹⁰ Kaufmann, "Hollow Forces," *ibid.*, 26.

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Author's Biographical Sketch

Lieutenant Colonel Tim Ringgold is an Army War College Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, DC. Prior to joining CSIS, he served in the Pentagon as the Chief of the Congressional Affairs Team, Office of the Director, Army National Guard, where he used his experience as a former congressional staff member, former candidate for Congress (PA-05), and congressional scholar to represent the Army National Guard in its relationship before Congress. An infantry officer, his previous assignments include five years in Europe where he commanded Audie Murphy's rifle company in the 3rd Infantry Division, Commandant of Pennsylvania's Officer Candidate School, instructor in leadership and tactics at the Army's Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, Assistant Professor of Military Science at Temple University, and numerous other command and staff positions. He is a 1990 graduate of the U.S. Army Command & General Staff College. LTC Ringgold received a B.S. from The United States Military Academy at West Point, advanced degrees in economics from both Temple University and LaSalle University, and a Master of Arts in legislative affairs from The George Washington University where he is a doctoral student in national security policy.